



The Basics of the Battle

So we've learned that we, as born-again Christians, are established in an unbreakable, contractual relationship with God through Jesus Christ, that this union with Christ results in our being adopted as children of God, chosen and dearly loved, and that we now have the Spirit of God dwelling within us, giving us a new nature conformed to Christ's image and guaranteeing our full and future salvation.

So what's the problem here?

Residues of the Fall—the battle is won, but it isn't over yet!

The Devil—our spiritual adversary, tempter and accuser. His tool is deception and his aim is to keep people following him instead of God. We are children of the one we imitate (remember our memory verse?). Whose values, whose priorities, whose influence, whose truth claims?

- ◆ Positional Victory: *“I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me”* (Acts 28:17-18).
- ◆ Progressive Victory: *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith”* (1Pet 5:8-9).
- ◆ Promised Victory: *“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever”* (Rev 20:10).

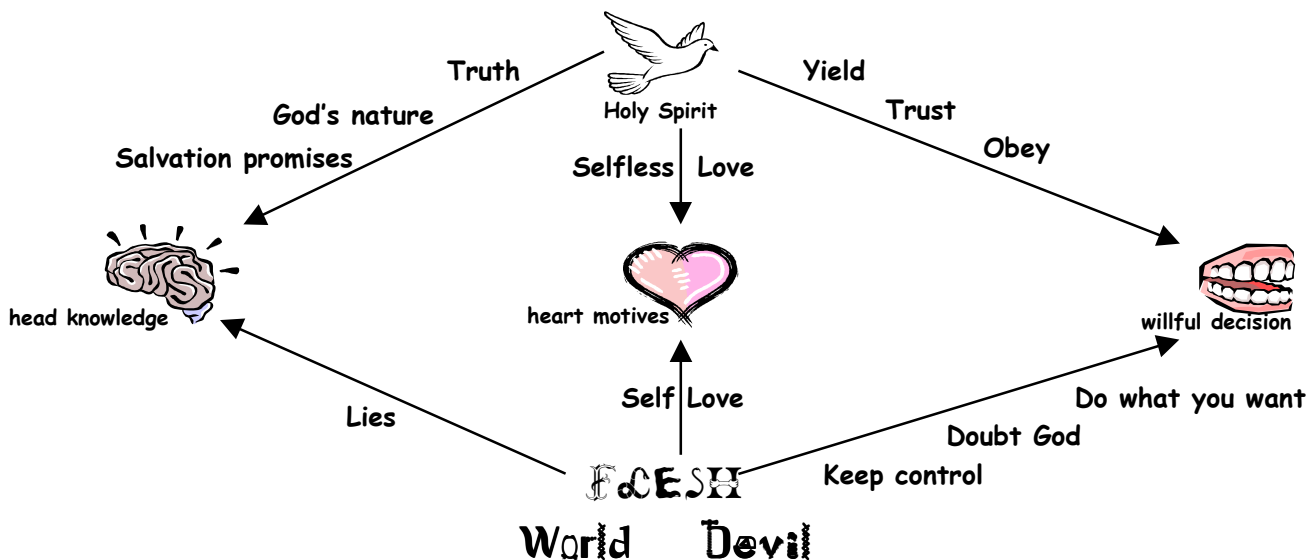
The World—any and all human society, with structures, policies, values and peer pressure that goads the Christian into ungodly conformity.

- ◆ Positional Victory: *“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”* (Gal 6:14).
- ◆ Progressive Victory: *“Keep oneself from being polluted by the world”* (James 1:27).
- ◆ Promised Victory: *“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”* (Rev 21:3-4).

The Flesh—our natural, sinful nature as fallen humans. The flesh loves only itself and desires immediate gratification and has an insatiable appetite. Like the blood-thirsty plant in the movie *The Little Shop of Horrors*, if you feed the flesh a little, it will only grow bigger and desire more.

- ◆ Positional Victory: “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*” (Gal 2:20).
- ◆ Progressive Victory: “*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature*” (Rom 13:14).
- ◆ Promised Victory: “*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure*” (1Jn 3:2-3).

Summary—the devil is the father of lies. The world has bought into his lies. Whenever a person turns to God through faith in Jesus Christ, they are doing the opposite of Adam & Eve—they are rejecting the lies of Satan and trusting in the promises of God. They are made into a new person, but the old sinful nature is not abolished and that flesh loves the tantalizing lies of the devil! The diagram below illustrates the internal battle every believer fights:



In this diagram you can see every aspect of the Christian life that we have discussed so far. God’s **grace** is given in salvation and the indwelling Holy Spirit, who puts God’s **love** in our hearts. Knowing the wisdom, power and love of God, we are compelled to **yield** to his lordship, **trust** in his promises and obey his commands. We **reckon the truth** of our new identity in Christ as greater than the struggles of our present experience and cultivate our new relationship with our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit

Satan is not creative. His lies are simply perversions of God’s truth. Temptation comes to us through empty promises rooted in misplaced love and misplaced faith.

Misplaced love and faith—idolatry and unbelief:

Legitimate Desires:	to enjoy what God has made	to have things God has provided	to be loved and accepted by others	to preserve myself for God's purposes
Root Sin:	Lust	Covetousness	Pride	Fear
Lie:	I deserve what I want, as much as I want, when I want it.		I will be alone without the recognition of others.	I've got to look out for myself.
Antidote:	Self-control	Contentment, Gratitude	Humility	Courage
Triumph of Trusting the Truth:	I trust God to satisfy my desires in His time and in His way	I trust God to provide for my needs in His time and in His way	I trust God who loves and accepts me unconditionally through Christ	I trust God who can protect me or bring me safely home into His presence

Adapted from *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics* by Robertson McQuilkin

When you are tempted or discouraged ask the question: “Which am I doubting: God’s wisdom, God’s love or God’s power?”

Is this a fair question? Why or why not?

Victory In Jesus—our spiritual weapons

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

(2Cor 10:3-4)

The Word of God defeats the devil’s lies, the world’s perspectives and our deceitful desires.



“Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (Jn 8:31-32).

Prayer is like radioing in airstrikes at the heart of the battle. In prayer we exercise faith in God’s promises and take Him up on his invitation to ask, for ourselves and others.



“Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Eph 6:10).

The Local Church is God’s embassy in the world as a worshipping, witnessing, discipling and supporting community of God’s Kingdom.



“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1-2).

The Holy Spirit is the controlling influence in a Christian instead of the flesh. He takes Christ’s victory and applies it to our lives. Our role is to yield to the Spirit and put the flesh to death.



“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal 5:16).

Christ's Victory allows us to rest secure in Christ's finished work on the cross on our behalf.



"They overcame [the accuser] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11).

Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31).

Week 5 Homework

- † Practice your memory verse: **Ephesians 5:1-2**
- † Read Schwarz, pp. 261-264
- † Read **Psalm 103:1-5**. In verse 5 how is God's promise to satisfy our soul's desires with good things different from Satan's temptations to satisfy our desires?

- † Read **2 Corinthians 6:3-10**, where Paul describes his Christian experience to the believers in Corinth who were doubting the sincerity of his ministry. Paul claims victory in this passage. How does his description reveal that our battle is quite unlike any worldly warfare?

- † Read **James 3:13-4:10**. For each of the points listed below, write out one or more phrases from this passage that address that topic:
 - God's provision: Grace
 - Repentance
 - True faith: Yield
 - True faith: Trust
 - Primary Motive: Love
 - Weapon: Bible
 - Weapon: Prayer
 - Root sin: Covetousness
 - Root sin: Pride
 - Spiritual enemy: the World
 - Spiritual enemy: the Flesh
 - Spiritual enemy: the Devil